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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a brief review of several key differences of opinion concerning purposes and conceptualizations of career education. A major difference of opinion exists concerning the emphasis of career education--economic man or total man. Differing points of view are also expressed in answer to the question, "Is career education all of education or is it only part of education?" Some people regard career education as a new title for vocational-technical education; others stress the importance of career education for all people at all educational levels from early childhood through adulthood. If these basic differences in the value systems of the various conceptualizers are not resolved, career education's potential for vitalizing and refocusing education could be lost. A both/and attitude rather than an either/or attitude is suggested. What is needed is a way of describing human growth and development in which "all dimensions of life are focused upon... as interrelated parts of the whole person." (Author/AG)

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Since the term career education was first introduced several years ago by Sidney Marland numerous efforts to conceptualize and implement the concept have occurred at Federal, State and local levels. Federal efforts have included financial assistance to States and local school districts as well as technical assistance through conferences, workshops and research and demonstration projects. Many States have developed career education position statements and/or guides, held conferences and workshops and have supported local school district career education projects financially. Local school districts across the country have formulated and begun the implementation of career education concepts.

The efforts of Federal, State and local educators to conceptualize career education and implement it in the schools are being received with mixed reactions. Some individuals and groups endorse the concept wholeheartedly. Others have taken a wait and see attitude while still others are openly suspicious and hostile. These differences of opinion among individuals and groups are substantial. They result in part from the different perspectives that these individuals and groups have about the nature of man and his social institutions. These differences form the basis for a number of critical issues in career education which must be resolved. This paper presents a brief review of several key differences of opinion concerning purposes and conceptualizations of career education.

A Work Ethic or a Life Ethic?

A major difference of opinion exists among educators concerning the emphasis of career education--economic man or total man. Although there is no official Federal definition of career education, an analysis of Federal publications, research and demonstration project guidelines and statements reveals that career education as it is interpreted by some at this level has as its major focus economic man. Individuals who support this point of view express the need to restore the credibility of the work ethic; to define work as personally meaningful, socially productive and beneficial.

> ...the career education movement seeks to define work as productive effort aimed at producing goods or services that will be beneficial to mankind. The connotations or productive and beneficial are equally important in this definition.
>
> It is a concept that pictures work as a prime means of helping all individuals meet their personal, human needs for achievement, for accomplishment. One must feel that he is doing something that is recognized by others as being meaningful to the worker.
>
> It is a concept that recognizes that one person may like his work while another may dislike the work he does; yet neither worker is diminished in the process.
>
> It is a concept that can be expressed in terms of the economic and societal necessity for work, but can be equally well expressed in terms of the psychological necessity for work as a means of enhancing one's self-concept.
>
> As envisioned by career education, work is a wonderful word that carries a host of positive connotations. Unfortunately, the word is not interpreted in such a way by many persons at the present time. A major portion of the initial career education effort must be directed toward changing the concept of work from one that carries negative connotations to one that viewed in a positive manner by the vast majority of people (Hoyt, 1973, p. 4).

Other educators point out that career education must focus on total man; that we must go beyond work and focus on all of the roles, settings, and events of a person's total life. From this perspective, the term career means more than occupation.

> ..."career" is defined as the course by which one develops and lives a responsible and satisfying life. By defining "career" in terms of man's life span, we must include one's roles as learner, producer, citizen, family member, consumer, and social-political being. Throughout a life span, these roles are in a constant state of changing relative importance. At one point, an individual may perceive the role of citizen as his highest priority. At another time, the role of producer may be most important. Although the assignment of permanent preeminence to any one of these roles must be avoided, temporary emphasis on one or another may be justified. (Gordon, 1973, p. 59)

This same theme was repeated by Larry Allen, a 1972 high school graduate of Searcy, Arkansas. When asked to discuss the concept of career education, he stressed the need to focus on learning to live as well as learning to make a living.

> ...I hope that when the time comes to follow a Career Education plan in public schools we don't limit the concept implied by the term "Career Education". In the future, the work careers of Americans will constitute only a portion of our daily lives. ... To lead full, useful lives, on the job and off, we must be prepared to develop ourselves into well-rounded individuals. (Allen, 1973, p. 162)

Those who advocate the point of view that career education must focus on total man, not economic man alone do not deny the importance of the role of work in the life of man. On the contrary, they recognize that work is a central activity for most people. But they also understand that work roles and settings cannot be separated from the other roles and settings of a person's total life. And that if work roles and settings are seen from this larger context, the development of economic man can be facilitated.

Former Labor Secretary Willard Wirtz made this point clear recently in a speech. He talked about the need to work toward a life ethic in which work has meaning.

> We are going to have to think about not just a "work ethic" but what life is all about. We should look for a "life ethic" that gives work more meaning. In such an environment productivity will have a much different definition today.

Part of Education or All of Education?

Is career education all of education or is it only part of education? Differences of opinion exist. On one side, career education is seen as being part of the total educational process. This perspective is evident in the following definition of career education.

> Career education is preparation for all meaningful and productive activity, at work or at leisure, whether paid or volunteer, as employee or employer, in private business or in the public sector, or in the family. (Hoyt, Evans, Macksin, and Manguson, 1972, p. 2)

From this perspective, career education involves that portion of the educational process which relates to preparation for work. The proponents of this position recommend substantial changes in present educational processes. They point out that much of education is overly abstract and often unrelated to the world, especially the work world. Young people have little knowledge and understanding of the work world and the possibilities it may have for them. There is a need for education that will provide individuals with experiences and training to succeed occupationally whenever they decide to leave the formal educational process. Career education formulated in this way encompasses vocational technical education, but also includes other educational curricula which can and should be related to the

work world. In this manner aspects of courses such as English, history, science and mathematics also are included in the career education concept.

The other position that is taken by a number of educators is that career education is education; that education cannot be divided into segments such as career education, health education and asthetic education.

> ...Career Education is properly synonymous in meaning with education. Or to put it differently, all education, in addition to whatever else it may be, should be career education. (McMurrin, 1973, p. 19)

The proponents of this position also recommend the need to make substantial changes in present educational processes. In this case, however, changes in all aspects of the educational process are recommended; not only in those aspects that relate to the work world. Those who favor the broad view of career education stress the need to relate all of education to all of the roles, settings and events of a person's total life.

For Some? For All? For What?

There is concern among some educators that career education is a new title for vocational-technical education. This concern is expressed in a number of ways. For example, in the summer 1972 issue of the National Urban League's Education Division Newsletter Epic, which was devoted entirely to career education, section subtitles such as "Career Education: A New Name for an Old Game" and "Career Education in the Midwest: Confused with Vocational Education" were used. In a similar way but from a somewhat different perspective, Nash and Ague (1973, p. 377) express concern about what they feel is an over emphasis in career education on the development of marketable skills at the expense of skills for living a life.

> To counteract the current preoccupation with marketable skills typical of many career programs, educators will have to consider the value of skills which may be probing, questionning, non-instrumental, and confrontative.

Other educators stress the importance of career education for all people at all educational levels from early childhood through the adult years. They feel, however, that some present conceptions must be extended to accomplish this.

> ...focusing on K-12 or even K-14 will inadvertently reinforce the image that Career Education is, after all, the old wine of vocational education in a new bottle...it is imperative to take every precaution to avoid the equation that Career Education equals vocational education. A demonstration that Career Education is for college students would help avoid this. (Spradley, 1973, p. 13)

Directly related to the issue of for whom is career education intended is the issue of the purpose of career education. The lives seem to be drawn most sharply between those who advocate a work world orientation with an emphasis on the development of marketable skills and those who feel career education should stress the development of "living a life" skills as well as "earning a living" skills. This difference in viewpoint can be seen in the quotations taken from the writings of Hoyt and Nash and Ague. This difference of opinion relates directly to the scope of career education and whether or not career education is part of education or all of education.

A Final Note

These different perspectives concerning the purposes and conceptualizations of career education are deeply engrained in the value systems of the various conceptualizers. The potential that the concept has for vitalizing and refocusing education could be lost if these basic differences are not resolved. For these differences to be resolved it will be necessary to adopt a both/and attitude rather than an either/or attitude. The various

perspectives concerning career education need to be brought together in a meaningful way. This, perhaps, is what Marland (1973, p. ix) meant when he said career education will be defined by practitioners.

> It is important to vote here that we had declined, and to this date continue to decline, to lay out a concrete Federal definition of Career Education. We have chosen to shun a Federal "approved solution," believing that if the notion has merit, it will be defined within general parameters jointly developed by the teachers, counselors, board of education members, college faculties, superintendents, and deans and the constituencies of parents and students whom we serve.

To bring the various perspectives about career education together to begin to resolve some of the critical issues concerning the purposes and conceptualizations of career education, there is a need to view human growth and development in all of its varied aspects. To respond to the individual and social needs of today and tomorrow, career education cannot be segmented and divided; neither can human growth and development. A number of career education conceptualizers state that career education is based upon career development concepts and principles. Although career development is defined in several ways--sometimes as a component of career education and sometimes as that part of human development dealing with the work world--it is seen as having primarily an occupational focus. If it is defined in this manner, such a view is too narrow. What is needed is a way of describing human growth and development in which "all dimensions of life are focused upon, not as separate entities, but as interrelated parts of the whole person" (Gysbers, Drier and Moore, 1973).

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